

California and Western Medicine

Official Organ of the California and Nevada Medical Associations

Owned and Published by the

CALIFORNIA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

FOUR FIFTY SUTTER, ROOM 2004, SAN FRANCISCO

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Advertisements.—The journal is published on the seventh of the month. Advertising copy must be received not later than the 15th of the month preceding issue. Advertising rates will be sent on request.

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Subscription prices, \$5.00 (\$6.00 for foreign countries); single copies, 50 cents.

Volumes begin with the first of January and the first of July. Subscriptions may commence at any time.

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EDITORIALS*

THE NEW HOME AND LIBRARY BUILDINGS OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

A Dream That Has Been Realized.—To be known as one of the larger component county medical societies of the United States, is a simple honor, but to possess at the same time one of the most attractive and efficient headquarters in home and library buildings to be found anywhere in the entire country, is a still more desirable and an even greater achievement.

On October 25, 1934, the new headquarters and library buildings of the Los Angeles County Medical Association were formally opened; and on pages 376 and 379 of this issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE will be found illustrated articles concerning both of the ornate buildings.

The Council of the California Medical Association, on November 10, met in the new headquarters and passed formal resolutions on behalf of the Association's members, congratulating the Los Angeles County Medical Association on its

unique good fortune. The buildings have been open only little more than a month; but their increasing use, day by day, by more and more members, has already raised the question of ampler accommodations to meet the growing activities of the society.

Too much praise cannot be given to the officers of the Association, whose influence in securing a wise investment of funds in real estate of rapidly increasing value provided the capital resources by which it was possible both to erect the structures, and to provide for their maintenance.

Members of the California and American Medical Associations who have occasion to come to Los Angeles are cordially invited to visit these architectural units, and to avail themselves of their varied facilities. The buildings, as splendid expressions of achievement, showing what organized medicine can attain in the domain of material accomplishment, have an inspirational value to physicians, which should be as great or greater than that to be found through hours spent in many old and new world museums and galleries.

With headquarters and a library such as are described and portrayed in this issue, the Los Angeles County Medical Association may be said to be only on the threshold of its real work and expanding career. Its example should stimulate the members of other component societies to be equally alert concerning their own present and future needs.

INITIATIVE 9 (CHIROPRACTIC) AND INITIATIVE 17 (NATUROPATHIC) DECISIVELY REJECTED

It is a matter of regrettable import that in the United States physicians, as a class, ordinarily evince only a moderate interest in civic affairs and political movements; but this year, owing to special conditions, members of the medical profession in California were led to take an active part in the recent political campaign, and join lay citizens who, by their ballots, decided a number of important questions. The issues which brought about this healthier participation by the members of the medical profession were two measures (Chiropractic Initiative 9 and Naturopathic Initiative 17), which it was proposed to enact into law by direct vote of the people.

For a discussion of the nature and scope of these movements, see comments in recent issues of this JOURNAL (October, pages 269 and 285, and November, page 338).

* * *

How Initiatives 9 and 17 Fared in the November Election.—The complete and final returns of the November 6 election will not be given out from Sacramento until December 15, but figures from the daily press, published shortly after the election, will answer our present needs.

Thus, on November 9, out of a total of 10,721 precincts in California, the vote of 9,357 precincts on Initiative 9 (Chiropractic) was 598,390 yes, and 961,863 no, a difference in favor of rejection of the proposed chiropractic law of 363,473 ballots.

* Editorials on subjects of scientific and clinical interest, contributed by members of the California Medical Association, are printed in the Editorial Comments column, which follows.

On Initiative 17 (Naturopathic) from a total of 8,354 precincts, the vote stood 408,884 yes, and 889,849 no, a difference in favor of rejection of the proposed naturopathic law (with 1,003 fewer precincts counted at the time) of 479,965 ballots.

In the year 1922, the osteopathic and chiropractic initiatives were passed with substantial majorities by initiative vote of the people. The figures of this year, therefore, would seem to indicate a much better understanding of the principles involved as regards the relation of sectarian healing art propaganda to real public health standards.

In the year 1922 the heavy vote in favor of the osteopathic and chiropractic initiatives came from Southern California. The November 8 returns from Los Angeles County, this year, were as follows: On Initiative 9 (Chiropractic), for 3,321 precincts out of 3,574, the vote was 284,351 yes, and 415,815 no, or a rejection majority of 131,564; while for Initiative 17 (Naturopathic), for 3,444 precincts out of 3,574, the vote was 209,193 yes, and 422,524 no, or a rejection majority of 213,331. We regret that it is not possible to give more exact figures for other counties, but those above obtainable are sufficient to show how alert the citizenry were in respect to the significance of these issues.

In Los Angeles County, the total approximate vote, according to the figures of November 8, of all the candidates for governor (3,559 precincts out of 3,574) was 931,372, while the total vote for Initiative 9 (Chiropractic) was 700,166 and for Initiative 17 (Naturopathic) was 731,717. These last statistics for Los Angeles County are illuminating, because the vote on initiative propositions this year was much larger in proportion to the gubernatorial vote than has usually been the case.

It is to be regretted that it is possible only to guess at the motivating influences which led citizens to vote "yes" or "no" on the initiatives under discussion. It may be that many who voted in favor (without understanding the scope of the measures) thought they were only giving a minority group an even chance, forgetting all about the element of low professional standards at which the opposition was primarily directed. Be that as it may, this year's conflict at the polls was most reassuring to the medical profession, because it demonstrated that organized and scientific medicine has little to fear from sectarian propaganda, if proper measures are taken to educate citizens concerning the real issues involved.

* * *

Splendid Coöperation Made the Victory Possible.—We have not the space to comment on all the forces that made possible a victory redounding much to the credit of the California Medical Association, whose members, through their component county societies, and also in many instances working in enthusiastic coöperation with chapters of the California Public Health League, were largely responsible for the very satisfying results obtained. In some counties, members sent out

hundreds of personal letters. The radio programs, too, no doubt had a valuable educational influence. Here and there, endorsements by Chambers of Commerce and similar bodies were secured. The League for the Preservation of Professional Rights circularized all the newspapers of the State. Hospitals, through their staff funds, supplied their members with post-cards to be sent to patients, and the California Medical Association sent fifty post-card forms to each of its members.

* * *

The Value of the Appeal Through Personal Letter and Card.—If we were to emphasize any one element in the publicity and contact work, it would be the value of the personal letter, when possible, or at least the signed post-card, for in the last analysis, what is wanted in an election is real contact with voters. The members of the California Medical Association have, as their patients, a majority of the citizens of California. These citizens believe in doctors of medicine, or they would not be their patients. The personal relation and confidence which exist between a physician and patient is not a transient or temporary thing, but is often a friendship based on years of friendly intercourse and understanding. In an election, such a patient-friend needs only be made acquainted with the nature of the basic issues at stake, to have him gladly accede to the request to consider his physician's viewpoint when he casts his own ballot.

* * *

The Attitude of Scientific Medicine.—We have been told that, since the election, one of the defeated cultist groups has held meetings, at which it was stated that two years hence, on the basis of their experience of the year just past, they would again go before the people. If so, we predict that, if they present similar propositions, they will go down to more disastrous and decisive defeat than in this year 1934.

Scientific medicine asks no special favors from the State, but it does insist that the State shall protect its lay citizens by demanding that all who practice the healing art shall have had adequate preliminary and professional training, in order to make them safe persons to whom citizens afflicted with disease or injury, may turn for skilled aid. We believe that when this principle is properly understood, about all citizens will hold similar views. Herein lies the strength of the position of the medical profession. The only other element needed, for successful results, is a knowledge of political procedure, whereby the thousands of citizens, who are patients, shall in easiest and most practical form be made to understand any public health measures under consideration, and the reasons why their personal physicians advocate acceptance or rejection.

It is gratifying to know that also the sectarian groups in Arizona and Oregon,* as well as in California, went down to defeat in the November elections. May it ever be so!

* See page 430 of this issue for comment thereon.

Need of a Qualifying Certificate (Basic Science) Act.—In concluding these comments, a few words on the program of the future may be in order. The citizens of California should not be called upon, every two to four years, to vote upon specious propositions such as the defeated Initiatives 9 and 17. Nor is it fair that the members of the medical profession should be obliged recurrently to give political battle to sectarian groups who would destroy decent standards of professional attainment. What then can be proposed to prevent such experiences? Our answer is that a practical remedy is to be found in a qualifying certificate (basic science) law. In the November issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE (page 339) some of the provisions of such a law, as accepted in a draft submitted to the Council of the California Medical Association by its special committee, were outlined. If you failed to read those comments, we suggest that you make a memorandum and refer to them. Any suggestions you may have thereon can be sent to the Association secretary, who will transmit them to the chairman of the special committee.

Whatever hesitancy may have existed in the past, concerning the advisability of placing a qualifying certificate (basic science) law on the State election ballot, has been dissipated by the recent election. It may, therefore, be stated that our immediate work is not so much to arrange for battle with sectarian practitioners at the next election, as it is to carry on a campaign of education so that the citizens of California will be prepared to enact by initiative vote, not later than 1936, a qualifying certificate law.

THE NEW CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE

The Fifty-First Session Will Convene in January, 1935.—The January issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE will be placed in the mails on January 10, but the fifty-fifth session of the legislature will begin some days before, on January 2, the legislature meeting throughout that month, and then going into a constitutional recess of one month (during February), to reconvene and be in session through March and April, and probably into May. Its rules of procedure provide that bills may be introduced throughout the month of January, but that after the February recess no bills may be introduced except by special consent.

It is possible that during the month of January a total of almost one thousand proposed laws having a bearing on public health and medical matters may be introduced. Each of these will necessitate careful reading and study. As a matter of fact, to properly safeguard the public health almost every bill must be perused to determine whether paragraphs having to do with public health interests are contained therein. At the coming session the task which confronts the California Medical Association's Committee on Public Policy and Legislation promises, in these unsettled times, to be greater and more onerous than ever. On that account, it is hoped that component county societies, through their members and offi-

cers, will strive to give to the committee, of which Dr. Junius B. Harris* of Sacramento is chairman, as prompt and efficient aid as may be possible.

* * *

Cordial Affiliations Should Be Established with State Assemblymen and Senators.—The November 6 election settled the question as to who should be State Assemblymen and Senators. Before these fellow citizens go as members-elect to Sacramento, the most cordial personal contacts should be made by the many members of the California Medical Association. State Assemblymen and State Senators are responsive to the viewpoints of their constituents, and it is a distinct advantage to the interests of the public health, and of organized and scientific medicine, if such Assemblymen and Senators have pleasant personal relations among the medical profession. Our representatives will be in their home communities during the month of December, and that would be a convenient time in which to renew or to make friendly affiliations.† Once the legislators are in Sacramento, the rush and turmoil of the political environment will not be so conducive to a good mutual understanding. All officers and members of component county societies, therefore, should avail themselves of the opportunities which still exist during the coming month of December, to create and make stronger their personal and friendly contacts with those who, as legislators, will be required to pass upon a multitude of public health measures.

THE MEDICAL-ECONOMICS SURVEY OF THE CALIFORNIA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION—IMPORTANCE OF COÖPERATION

Questionnaire of the Committee of Five.—Reasons why it is necessary that all members of the California Medical Association should coöperate with the California Medical Association Committee of Five by sending in their filled-out confidential and impersonal questionnaire blanks as promptly as possible were given in the November issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE (pages 338 and 344). The attention of all members who have not so forwarded their replies is again called to the requests therein made, in the hope that their perusal will lead to an early response with the medical-economic information that is so much needed if the survey, which our Association has started, is to be of real value. The office headquarters of the administrative staff of the California Medical Association Survey is located at 9623 Brighton Way, Beverly Hills, California, and to this address all communications should be mailed.

Officers of county societies are urged to bring this matter to the attention of their members at every society meeting, and members themselves are asked to mention the subject to one another, because such comment and discussion are more apt

* Editor's Note.—At the time these page proofs are being read, Doctor Harris is reported most seriously ill in the Sutter Hospital in Sacramento. His colleagues extend their sincerest wishes for a prompt and complete recovery.

† For roster of Fifty-first California Legislature, see page 431.